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Authors

Wilson, Carlos Guillermo
Smart, Ian I.

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SHORT STORY

CARBON Y LECHE

por

Carlos Guillermo Wilson (Cubena)

El incesante lloriqueo de los mocosos, piojosos, andrajosos chiquillos enloquecía. Lamentaban a coro. En un oscuro desaseado, apestoso rincón del cuartucho la madre, con el cuer doliente por las mordidas y patadas del marido, calentaba en e fogón, agua azucarada para apaciguar a los hambrientos llorone

En casa del borracho, era la misma jeringa de siempre; cada quincena, el beodo de la familia llegaba ebrio, meándose los pantalones y golpeando sin piedad a la pobre mujer, dando así rienda suelta a su crueldad. Cuando se cansaba de la ruti pugilista, sus garras arrancaban violentamente el remendado tr que servía de cubre cuerpo a la maltratada. Ella solía gritar con pudor—"Los niños, los niños.." Pero, antes de baladrear--lo niños--por tercera vez, la silla, la mesa y la cama quedaban y teadas de semen.

Cada vez que la maltrecha caía enferma, muy frecuetemer la hija mayor era forzada a subrogar a la madre en el fogón y aun, en la cama del borracho. Los asquerosos pequeños de ayur perpetuas ya estaban acostumbrados al vulgar espectáculo.

Los gruñidos del borracho habían perdido ferocidad y lo hijos hast llegaron a hacer caso omiso a las injurias que les ladraba el padre.

El escaso sueldo que ganaba el inculto en su trabajo, despilfarraba en el hipódromo, la cantina y la lotería.

La triste situación pecuniaria del hogar fue de mal en peor gracias al dinero que se gastaba en la lotería del domin y la del miércoles también.

No era raro que la estropeada hablara a solas. Sus soliloquios eran frecuentes. A pesar de que el marido era un cero a la izquierda, ella, en su presencia, no se atrevía a decir esta boca es mía. Maldita lotería--susurraba ella a menudo--no nos favorece los domingos y ahora inventan el mier lito.

El miercolito, en menos que se persigna un ñato, se ha establecido al igual que la lotería dominical, en un vicio nacional. Ahora, dos veces por semana, ya no una, el pueblo

SHORT STORY

COAL AND MILK

by

Carlos Guillermo Wilson (Cubena)

The incessant snivelling of the snotty-nosed, lice-ridden, ragged little urchins was enough to drive one mad. They whined in unison. In a dark, untidy, pestilent corner of the shack their mother, her body aching from her husband's bites and kicks, stooped over a coal-pot warming a little sugar water to soothe the hungry little whiners.

It was always the same ruckus in the drunk's house: every two weeks the alcoholic would get home inebriated, pissing his pants and pitilessly beating the poor woman, giving full vent to his cruelty. When he tired of the pugilistic routine, he would violently rip off the unfortunate woman's patched up rags. She would cry out in shame, "the children, the children." But, before she could shriek out the third - "the children"--the chair, the table, the bed would be sprinkled with semen.

On the frequent occasions that the battered woman fell ill, the eldest daughter was obliged willy-nilly to take her place over the coal-pot and even in the drunkard's bed. The filthy, perpetually starved little ones grew quite accustomed to the vulgar spectacle.

The drunkard's growls had lost their ferocity and the children even reached the point of blanking out the insults barked at them by their father.

The brute squandered his meager income on horses, booze and the lottery.

The family's sad financial situation went from bad to worse thanks to the money spent on the Sunday as well as the Wednesday drawings.

It was not unusual for the abused woman to talk to herself. Her soliloquies were frequent. Even though her husband was a nonentity, in his presence she became as meek as a lamb. "Damn lottery," she frequently muttered, "the Sunday drawings are bad enough and now they have this Wednesday one too."

In no time whatsoever the Wednesday drawing was established, on an equal footing with the Sunday one, as a national

se paraliza al mediodía de todos los domingos y, hoy día, los miércoles asimismo; las orejas y los ojos con ansiedad que con frecuencia se desborda en agonía, están atentos a los números que dicta Fortuna.

Cuando se concluye la ceremonia en la Plaza Santa Ana, las maldiciones y los sollozos cunden en los chiribitiles más menesterosos. Todos los domingos y cada miércoles...

Un martes estival, la desesperada madre de los mocosos decidió obtener dos perros callejeros, de esos que nacen y mueren sin amo. A ella le había llamado la atención cómo esos animales de alguna manera se ingenian un modo de saciar el hambre cotidiana.

El chisme que andaba de boca en boca, en el paupérrimo, roñoso, nauseabundo vecindario, era el asunto de los perros en casa del alcohólico.

--;Epa! ¡Quiúbo vecina! ¿Cómo tá?

--;Opa! Entre chivo y conejo.

--Veci, ¿te contaron lo de los perros?

--;Je! ¿Y de cuándo ese bochinche?

--Pue, en casa de los llorones...

--;Ajo! Ve la vaina pue. No tenen dónde caer muertos y ora tenen perros

--E verdá. Pa que sufra usté, comadre, ahora son dizque gentes de categoría en cajeta.

Carbón y Leche eran perros flacos, sarnosos, calungos. Los piojosos, en el cuchitril, se divertían a cada instante con los perros, los únicos juguetes que llegaron a poseer. El juego favorito era "perritos". Los hambrientos fingían ser cachorros y se turnaban para mamar las ubres de Leche. La madre se hacía de la vista gorda en cuanto al motivo de la alegre gritería de los hijos.

Carbón y Leche salían a la calle, solamente, por la madrugada.

El alcoholizado, como de costumbre, cada quincena, llegaba embriagado y con los pantalones empapados de orina. Después de gastarse hasta los últimos centavos en caballos, aguardientes y juegos, se sentaba tranquilamente a la mesa para que la esposa

vice. Now, twice a week, not just once, the town comes to a halt at midday every Sunday and nowadays every Wednesday too; ears and eyes with an anxiety frequently bordering on anguish are riveted to the numbers Lady Luck announces.

When the ceremony in the Santa Ana Plaza is over, curses and sobs fill up the most wretched of the shacks. Every Sunday, every Wednesday...

One Tuesday, in summer, the desperate mother of the snotty-nosed brats decided to get two mongrels, the kind that normally go ownerless from birth to death. She had particularly noted how these animals in one way or another manage to find a means of satisfying their daily hunger.

In the poverty-ridden, filthy, nauseous neighborhood everyone began to gossip about the business of the dogs in the drunkard's house.

--Ohoy! What are you saying neighbor. How are you doing?

--O.K. yes, I struggling along.

--Neighbor, you hear the business about the dogs?

--Eh heh, so is when this business start?

--Well, in the cry-cry children house. . .

--Well look what happen, huh. They don't have a thing to eat and now they gone get a dog.

--Is truth. But that is them business, yes, my dear, now I suppose them is decent civilized people.

Coal and Milk were emaciated, mangy mongrels. In their hovel the little brats constantly played with the dogs, the only toys they ever had. The favorite game was "little doggies." The hungry children pretending to be puppies took turns sucking Milk's udders. Their mother turned a blind eye to the source of her children's happy shouts.

Coal and Milk only went into the streets in the early morning.

The alcoholic as usual got home drunk every fourteen days, his pants soaked in urine. After spending his last cent on horses, rum and gambling, he would calmly sit down to the table expecting his wife to feed him. Without bothering about where the woman got the money for the food, the man sniffed it then licked the three plates clean, thinking that he was eating some

le diera en la boca. El hombre, sin importarle de dónde saca el dinero la mujer para la comida, olfateaba y, luego, lambeaba los tres platos, creyendo que era sancocho, angü, guacho o puré de algo.

El borracho empujaba el codo más que nunca. Tenía más dinero para su vicio de la cantian porque la mujer ya no le daba en el codo para la mesa y, ya no era menester saquear de los bolsillos mientras él dormía la juma.

La madre de los hambrientos soltaba fielmente a los perros por la madrugada. Carbón y Leche conocían el camino a ciegas y siempre regresaban a la hora acostumbrada.

En el Marañón, ghetto de los de abajo, el vecindario intensificó las vilipendiosas hablillas sobre los perros.

--¡Opa, comadre!

--¿Qué hay, coma?

--Algo huele a raro en casa del...

--Sí, hay perros encerrados. Y ya no se oye: "¡Ay, hijo Pégale a tu..."

--Y ahora los mocosos dicen que toman leche. ¡Mire no más!

--¡Ajá! Eso no e ná. Oye ete bochinche. La vecina peregrina

--¿La chancletera que habla hasta por los codos?

--Pue, mire no más, me contó que hasta carne se come en casa del borracho.

--¿Cómo va ser?

--Pue, sí.

--Pelo, se gasta toa la plata en guaro y por eso siempre en fuego.

--A mí no me gusta vidajenear, pero, ota cosa...

--Apúrate que se me quema el arroz y a mi cacique...

--Ya sé, se emputa si le das concolón.

--Pue, escupe.

--Bueno, Leche siempre etá preñá y nunca se ve la cría.

stew or "angu" or "guacho" or some kind of puree.

He was imbibing more than ever now. He had more money to support his habit since his wife no longer hassled him for food money, and it was no longer necessary to pilfer his pockets as he slept off his drunk.

Bright and early every morning the hungry children's mother would let out her dogs. Coal and Milk knew the way with their eyes closed and always returned at the usual time.

In the down-trodden ghetto, the neighbors intensified their vicious gossip about the dogs.

--Eh eh, macomere!

--How you going, macomere?

--Something fishy going on in...house.

--Yes, they have the dogs lock up. And now you don't hear no "Ayeyayaye you son of....., Why don't you beat up your....."

--And now they say the pickney them drinking milk. You ever hear more?

--Ahha, that is nothing. Hear this one. The crochety neighbor...

--That one who does be always talking, talking?

--That one self, look nuh, she tell me that they even eating meat in the liquor head hours.

--But what you saying?

--Yes my dear.

--But he does spend all he money on rum that's why he always so hot up.

--I don't like to mind other people business myself, but, another thing. . .

--Hurry up, nuh, my rice burning and the old man. . .

--Yes I know he does turn beast if you give him burn burn.

--Well, Milk always pregnant and you ever see any pups?

--Well, I going yes. I ain't want to hear no more about

--¡Ah! Me voy, yo no quiero sabeí de ese lío.

Todas la madrugadas, Carbón y Leche trotaban hacia el matadero municipal. Allí, se hartaban del mondongo que encontraban en los tinacos.

Carbón y Leche, al regresar al cuartucho de los indigentes antes de que todos despertaran, eran forzados por la madre de piojosos a vomitar para darle de comer a la familia.

* * * * *

Cubena es la hispanizacion de KWABENA. El profesor Dr. Carlos Guillermo Wilson es de ascendencia africana y nacio un martes. Entre la gente ASHANTI de habia TWI en GHANA, AFRICA, se acostumbra nombrar a los varones con el nombre del dia en que nacieron.

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this business.

Bright and early every morning, Coal and Milk trotted off to the municipal slaughter house. There they filled up on the intestines foraged from the garbage cans.

When Coal and Milk returned to the shack, well before the others awoke, the mother of the ragged little brats would force the dogs to vomit so that she could provide food for her family.

* * * * *

Translated from the Spanish by Ian I. Smart.

REDEFINING TERMS USED FOR AFRICA

How many school educated Africans do not use such terms as "pagan", "tribe", "pygmies", "bushmen", "ancestor-worship", "primitive", "ritual", "witch-doctor", "stateless societies", etc., in a sense which is derogatory to Africa's image? How many of these terms do erstwhile colonialists use to describe their own societies? This is food for thought. *Ufahamu* is inviting observations on possible alternative terms and re-definitions for these. It is time Africa calls herself what she wishes to be called by *not* what alien peoples would want to call her. As we promised we made a beginning in our Vol. VII, No. 1. So, let us hear from all of you out there. Notes, letters, and articles no matter how long, are welcome.